Cosmopolitan communication studies

Toward deep internationalization. An introduction

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Introduction

This book aims to contribute to a "deep internationalization" of media and communication studies by offering insights and guidance on how to integrate a cosmopolitan perspective in our discipline.[1] Building on the debates on de-Westernization and cosmopolitanism in the decades since the 2000s, the book advocates for the inclusion of both global and local perspectives and context-led approaches in communication studies. We argue that acknowledging and incorporating epistemologies, topics, and methodologies from diverse regions, contexts, and backgrounds will enhance the comprehensiveness and relevance of our discipline and foster a more inclusive and meaningful understanding in communication studies.

This book is the main outcome of the research network Cosmopolitan Communication Studies, which was set up in 2019 and was supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) from 2021–2025. It comprises both established and emerging scholars located mainly in Germany who are campaigning for a deep internationalization. The network has provided a mapping of the research and teaching landscape in communication studies in Germany, pointing to its lack of internationalization. It has published policy and debate papers and organized several conferences and PhD workshops.[2] This book is the product of multiple rounds of discussions among network members and associated authors, aiming to contribute to the debate

1 In the following, we consistently use the term "communication studies" as we consider it an umbrella term for what is in most parts of the world referred to as "media and communication studies." In Germany, however, there is a somewhat rigid separation between (more literature and theater-oriented) media studies and (more mass media-oriented) communication studies (see also Richter et al., 2024).

2 For more information about the network and its output, see: https://www.polsoz.fu-berlin.de/en/kommwiss/arbeitsstellen/internationale_kommunikation/Projekte-und-Publikationen/Cosmopolitan-Communication-Studies/index.html?ts=1685960329

about internationalization and advocating a cosmopolitan turn in communication studies. Although the network was set up within a German-speaking context, we recognize that the topics and challenges addressed in this book go far beyond the German-speaking research community. Thus, the primary aim of this work is to foster the connection of research communities from different parts of the world to advance the cosmopolitanization of communication studies.

What do we mean by cosmopolitan communication studies? Attempting a definition

The call for de-Westernizing communication studies started in the late 1990s. James Curran and Myung-Jin Park's book *De-Westernizing Media Studies* (2000) positioned itself as "part of a growing reaction against the self-absorption and parochialism of much Western media theory" (p. 1). Several books and articles have been published since then that have addressed this subject. Daya Thussu's edited volume titled *Internationalizing Media Studies* (2009) brought together scholars from different parts of the world, claiming that "theories of globalization . . . have failed to globalize imagination that is to retrieve and disseminate theories of the global from non-Western and non-metropolitan centres" (p. 17). The book *Internationalizing "International Communication"* that was edited by Chin-Chuan Lee (2015) also collected the voices of scholars who had been calling for more global perspectives. Multiple conferences and publications aimed to push forward a less hegemonic approach that presents multiple and critical perspectives on what is understood as international and inter-/transcultural in our discipline (for an overview, see Glück, 2018).

In a special issue of *Communication Theory* in 2014, Silvio Waisbord and Claudia Mellado produced a "reassessment" of the de-Westernization of communication studies. Indeed, thus far, many scholars have injected knowledge that was, for a long time, seen as marginal and, therefore, irrelevant to mainstream communication studies. These scholars include Winston Mano and viola milton (2021) and their Afrokology approach, Daya Thussu (2013) with his emphasis on "Chindia" as a new global player, and several scholars from Latin America showing the merits of a critical decolonial approach to communication and media (Ganter & Ortega, 2019).

At the same time, ongoing debates about White Western dominance in communication studies, emphasized in the #CommunicationSoWhite campaign (Chakravartty et al., 2018), continuous calls for decolonization in social sciences (Badr & Ganter, 2021; Carpentier et al., 2020), and observations about the glaring lack of international and transcultural perspectives in German communication studies' curricula made by the editors of this volume (Badr et al., 2020; Richter et al., 2023), have shown that there is still a need to truly de-Westernize and to become more cosmopolitan. Waisbord and Mellado (2014) have argued in their reassessment that "the subject of study, the body of evidence, analytical frameworks, and academic cultures" (p. 363) as a whole need to be critically reviewed and subjected to de-Westernization.

In this introduction, we continue this debate and call for a cosmopolitan turn in communication studies. We aim to identify the actual obstacles and constraints that will

need to be overcome to achieve a more cosmopolitan perspective. Yet, we do not simply want to stress the deficits. Instead, in this book, we strive to make concrete suggestions on how meaningful cosmopolitan approaches could look like in the multiple subfields that constitute communication studies. In doing so, we rely on Waisbord's (2015) assessment that "cosmopolitan scholarship is not reduced to being hospitable to 'international' research. Instead, it is a globalized perspective that critically considers world differences to probe theoretical arguments and define empirical questions" (pp. 185–186). In other words, it is not enough to be aware of and acknowledge research and knowledge produced in non-Western regions but to systematically incorporate it into dominant (Western) approaches and understandings of communication processes. Moreover, such an approach implies including inter- and transdisciplinary perspectives and struggling with the problems arising therefrom, or, as Carpentier et al. (2020) have put it, "cosmopolitan researchers look across and share disciplinary, cultural, geographical, linguistic, and structural borders, accepting the challenges that this imposes" (p. 292). A mere diversification of personnel and approaches would hence be an abridging of a "deep internationalization" and a "deep transculturalization" in the aforementioned sense. However, a true enhancement of academic cosmopolitanism calls for an epistemic transformation through theoretical and methodological openness and an examination of the contextual and structural reasons for the invisibility of some voices (Badr & Ganter, 2021).

To pursue this endeavor, we have embraced new perspectives on cosmopolitan research. These perspectives may have arisen from "below" and from "within" communication studies. First, cosmopolitanism from below seeks to identify and take seriously the perspectives stemming from non-privileged contexts. Without a context sensitive cosmopolitanization from below, a Eurocentric view, with its inherent projection of an occidental superiority, is the most likely outcome (Gunaratne, 2010; McQuail, 2000; Wang, 2011). Waisbord and Mellado (2014) referred to this as a call to review the "subject of study," "body of evidence," and "analytical frameworks" of communication research. They demanded a "shift in the analytical mindset" (p. 365). They argued that researchers should be "curious about the applicability of concepts, theories, and arguments across settings, aware of the impact of particular conditions on academic production, and modest about the generalizability of conclusions" (p. 365). Second, a cosmopolitanization from within communication studies demands non-coercive and egalitarian communication studies. Here, awareness of one's own (Occidental) identity and positionality plays a decisive role in the perception of other contexts (Hantrais, 1999; Said, 1996) because "scientists, like other observers, hold a myriad of preconceptions and biases about the way the world operates" (Kim, 2007, p. 280). With reference to Beck and Sznaider (2006), a cosmopolitanization from within also means including perspectives from superdiverse societies that have emerged in the West. Ultimately, this is a call to change academic cultures and their dominant ideas of knowledge production (Alves & Medeiros, 2021, pp. 4–7).

In terms of a definition, cosmopolitan communication studies are the result of a "deep internationalization" that goes beyond a simple gathering of case studies around the world. A cosmopolitan approach in communication studies is characterized by valuing the "common bonds" that shape communication phenomena at various times and places, albeit "recognizing differences and shared conditions" (Waisbord, 2016, p. 880). Cosmopolitanism is meant to "really benefit from the interconnectedness that globaliza-

tion provides communication studies with" (Alves & Medeiros, 2021, p. 5). It can enrich the discipline with new angles of knowledge through epistemic diversity (Mutsvairo et al., 2021). Also, it is a way to expand analytical frameworks by incorporating comparative expertise. A cosmopolitan approach in communication studies is thus a normative horizon of inclusive knowledge production from all world regions.

Why do we lack cosmopolitanism in communication studies? A deficit analysis

The Western gaze

When browsing through the prominent and most highly ranked journals and textbooks in communication studies, the obvious finding is the predominance of the Western gaze in research and a pronounced US- and Eurocentrism. Not only do the theories and concepts primarily come from the West, but samples and examples almost exclusively stem from Western Europe, North America, and Australia (de Albuquerque, 2021; Ganter & Ortega, 2019; Hanitzsch, 2019, p. 215). Even if research from non-Western scholars or on non-Western examples is included in the dominant journals, most of such research focuses on building cumulative knowledge and generalizability, hence the replication and application of well-established typologies, indicators, and categories predominantly developed in and for Western contexts. Despite the rich academic traditions in regions such as the Middle East, post-Soviet states, South America, and East Asia, English-speaking communication studies have largely overlooked academic production schools from these areas (Demeter, 2017; Kim, 2009).

We should question approaches that rely on US- and Eurocentrism, not only but also because they prevent us from finding more convincing explanations. Referring to the economic crises and the rise of populism in the West that took many researchers by surprise, the South African scholar Herman Wasserman argued: "I think there's a fundamental realization that still has to dawn on many people in the Global North that you have to find the answers somewhere else. And I think that's the work, that this sort of internationalization has to do: to shift that perception" (Grüne et al., 2024, p. 14).

However, the current political economy of academic systems and the strong Western funding schemes are part of the problem rather than part of the solution. They often foster short-lived research according to sociopolitical requirements of Western countries to deal with current crises. Research on countries beyond the Western world often follows a kind of a "market" and "crisis" logic. For example, when there is political attention in the West toward the South because of a revolution (such as during the so-called Arab Spring in 2011), a war or militant conflict in which the West is involved (as in Ukraine in 2022, Iraq in 2003, or Afghanistan in 2001 and 2021), or when a health crisis or similar emergency occurs in which Western countries might be affected (as in the case of Ebola or crises that stimulate migration toward the North)—in these cases, academic interest also increases. This results in research foci that are less critical than required and help security agencies and law enforcement authorities to gain information about minorities or countries with vulnerable political systems rather than foci that promote to study

transcultural innovations and networks and cross-national communication in the sense of cosmopolitanism (Ashwell & Croucher, 2018). These funding initiatives and organizations also foster an administrative research line that serves the national interests of the donor states and/or funding organizations, such as the EU or the World Bank (e.g., St. Clair, 2006). Thus, the "global impact of western theories cannot be explained only by their intrinsic merits, but as the result of the socialization of scholars from all parts of the world in western educational institutions, and the networks built around them" (de Albuquerque, 2021, p. 180).

Globalization is leading to an increase in the economic, political, and cultural interdependencies of all world regions, mostly driven by a neoliberal logic that impacts our knowledge production. Therefore, communication studies are still shaped by US- and Eurocentrism and an instrumental understanding of learning about the world instead of taking a truly cosmopolitan view.

Lack of contextualization

A typical problem that prevents a cosmopolitan turn in communication studies is that analyses and interpretations of communication processes and media phenomena in non-Western regions often lack adequate contextualization. Contextual knowledge is critical in understanding specific phenomena and actions and attributing meaning to them. Contextualization requires first and foremost scholars with language and cultural expertise about the country and region in focus instead of "parachute" scholars who are not familiar with the media systems and communication cultures they study. The particular characteristics of social, political, economic, cultural, and historical contexts are often not properly acknowledged, and instead, social concepts and categories from other contexts are imposed (de Albuquerque, 2021). Consequently, analyzing media environments, most notably in under-researched regions, requires consideration of context-specific characteristics (Chakravartty & Roy, 2013; Kuo & Chew, 2009, p. 423; Willnat & Aw, 2009) without the assumption of exceptional uniqueness or otherness. Therefore, contextualization and being aware of one's own academic perspective on and relation to the objects of analysis are the basis for cosmopolitan research in communication studies (Hantrais, 1999, pp. 103–104). Cosmopolitan research must thus be designed inductively to be versatile but concrete enough to capture the contexts in question with its inherent values and philosophies (e.g., Miike, 2002). Such a research approach contrasts with the current practice of placing mass communication contexts in predefined pigeonholes, where we shoehorn them into improper models regardless of their actual characteristics (see, for example, the debate about Hallin and Mancini's, 2004 media system typology and its applicability to the Global South in Hallin and Mancini, 2011). Contextualization generally challenges the use of typologies of hegemonic approaches. Consequently, "context" should be more widely acknowledged.

Epistemic violence

The lack of contextualization is not only a problem because it does not allow us to understand properly. It can also lead to epistemic violence, including constant (implicit or

explicit) othering and silencing voices in mainstream (Western) research (Spivak, 1988). This concerns approaches and methodologies at the same time. Othering creates concepts of social reality that reproduce the normative dichotomies of civilized vs. uncivilized worlds (Hall, 1994). The unreflected (or even conscious) use of terminologies that have the power to label and reproduce labels is an essential component of epistemic violence and othering. For example, seemingly "normal" geographic labels carry certain assumptions. The term "post-Soviet" was introduced as a descriptor for countries emerging from the Soviet Union's collapse, initially viewed as a transitional label (Buyandelgeriyn, 2008). However, more than 35 years later, this label no longer accurately reflects the current realities of these countries (Sagatienė, 2023). For example, Ukraine's ongoing fight for independence, particularly its rejection of ties to Russian imperialism and the Soviet legacy, suggests that continuing to use the term "post-Soviet" may overlook the aspirations of these nations. Another such label is the term "Middle East," referring to a heterogeneous region from a geopolitical point describing a region emanating from a Eurocentric gaze. An intuitive counter-question is: Middle of what, and East of what? (El Houri, 2024). Similarly, the term "Global South" is a useful tool for discussing global inequalities, but it too must be reconsidered each time it is used (Haug, 2021). The countries grouped under this term represent a broad diversity of experiences, histories, and political realities. Rather than applying it as a blanket label or as "a fancy equivalent for the idea of 'rest of the world'" (de Albuquerque, 2021, p. 186), scholars should reflect critically on the countries they are describing, taking into account the varied dynamics at play in different regions. The "Global South" label, while convenient, risks simplifying this diversity if not continuously reflected upon and reassessed.

Also, an emphasis on normative and strongly deterministic approaches, such as the "public sphere," "democratic participation," "good governance," "media freedom," or "journalistic objectivity," may result in a devaluation of what is happening in many parts of the world instead of understanding it within its particular context (Ganter & Badr, 2022). In the case of "journalistic professionalism," which, for example, mostly refers to the paradigm of objectivity, a differentiated perspective is needed that takes other values of journalism into account, such as advocacy (Standaert et al., 2021). Waisbord (2016) referred to "translation" as a way to confront "the clash between dogmatism and difference, language slips and gaps, and the possibility of (mis)understandings" (p. 871) that are inherent in academic knowledge production about the "other." Yet, translation in a cosmopolitan sense is not easy to achieve because the underlying foundation for the above described phenomena is the power asymmetries in knowledge production and knowledge transfer.

After two decades wherein there has been a demand for de-Westernization in knowledge production, one still has to conclude that communication studies are dominated by White researchers located in the West (Chakravartty et al., 2018; Ganter & Ortega, 2019; Alves & Medeiros, 2021). One reason for this is a highly unbalanced knowledge production and transfer. Research has proven the power of geopolitical position in the production of academic knowledge. For example, the location of scientific journals matters regarding their visibility; whether a journal is located in the USA or Europe or elsewhere makes a difference (de Albuquerque, 2021). The limited or even (im)mobility of scholars from the Global South due to visa restrictions and a lack of funding prevents them from

gaining equal access to participation in international conferences or scholarship programs (Axyonova et al., 2022). In addition, as in many disciplines, English is seen as the lingua franca for publishing in communication studies—yet, it is questionable whether its almost exclusive use in science enables the free circulation of knowledge. Suzina (2021) described the hegemony of English as a "sterilization of scientific work" (p. 171). "English only" prevents many scholars from describing their ideas and local concepts with specific wording, which in turn, leads to the fact that literature reviews often only consider some relevant texts because they are published in English. Yet, it is precisely through language that an alternative reality to mainstream English-based communication research can be created (Demeter et al., 2022). What is more, many researchers in the Global South lack the means of paying for professional English copy editing, which often results in a blowback in the peer review process of the most important and highly ranked journals that are exclusively in the hands of European and US-American publishing houses (Goyanes, 2020). Despite a transformation trend toward more editorial diversity in gatekeeper positions and "mindful inclusiveness," the road toward true epistemic diversity is still long (Rao, 2019). Here again, the commodification of publishing comes into play: publishing houses' main customers are financially potent Western universities for whom they want to produce allegedly relevant knowledge, that is, local Western knowledge with which consumers can easily identify (de Albuquerque, 2021). However, instead of consumer-centric knowledge production for Western scholars, we need more context-based knowledge to broaden the scope.

Restricting methodologies

Research methodologies often fail to reflect the realities of the Global South because they are not sufficiently adapted to the specific contexts and challenges of conducting research in these regions. Traditional methodologies, largely developed in the West, assume the availability of reliable and comprehensive statistical data, such as media outreach, circulation figures, the number of journalists and media outlets, or media ownership structures. However, in the Global South, this data may frequently be unavailable, unreliable, or incomplete due to a range of structural problems, including limited resources for data collection, weak institutional frameworks, and political constraints. Questions about access to archives, open science, security, and safety of the research subjects, or even questions concerning basic infrastructure such as electricity or the Internet, rarely appear in communication methods training. As a result, methodologies that rely on such data are ill-suited to these contexts, as they fail to account for local complexities or to adapt to the limitations of data collection in these regions (Moyo, 2020).

In addition, due to the highly commercialized publication system described above, scholars are not encouraged to do research in peripheral regions, as established and dominant methods are difficult to apply. Ultimately, these methodological limitations restrict our understanding of media systems in the Global South, leaving vast areas of the world inadequately studied and poorly understood.

However, context sensitive research can be achieved through qualitative methods. Research has shown that outside the West, such research is more present. For example, in Brazil, mostly qualitative approaches were applied to study communication phenomena

during the COVID-19 pandemic, in contrast to the overall use of quantitative methods (Barreto de Souza et al., 2023). Methods must also reflect the possibility that different contexts might follow different realities. Therefore, for example, a historical perspective that accounts for the transformative dynamics of communication can be helpful in embracing the possibility of the plurality of path dependencies (e.g., Roudakova, 2011).

How to achieve cosmopolitanism? A tentative guideline

The obstacles to increased cosmopolitanism in communication studies are thus structural and related to a West–South asymmetry in knowledge production, but they also stem from an ignorance that is entrenched in the comfortable position of Western scholars. That ultimately means that we as scholars should challenge ourselves to rethink our epistemic comfort zones and dare to create epistemic discomfort by pushing the boundaries, thus enabling a more inclusive, context sensitive understanding of media and communication phenomena and thereby slowly changing the structural imbalances.

While aiming for true and deep internationalization, we should not make the mistake of essentializing the West or instrumentalizing the call for de-Westernization to push nationalist or identity-focused explanations. Waisbord and Mellado (2014) warned us of "academic commissars patrolling the borders of legitimate knowledge" (p. 368), and Ray (2012) called upon us to de-Westernize, "but with a critical edge" (p. 238). Despite the structural and epistemic problems outlined above, we should also not forget that there are several developments that we can build on when aiming to achieve cosmopolitanism in communication studies.

Incorporate the flow of people and ideas into knowledge production

There is a historically grown and constant transnational flow of people in academia—voluntarily or by force (see Axyonova et al., 2022)—that helps to bring in new perspectives and shake up established explanations. Instead of mainstreaming their ideas and approaches according to "our" academic systems, communication scholars in the West could gain a more cosmopolitan perspective by placing the knowledge of "others" at the center of their studies (Richter et al., 2024).

At the same time, tokenism and a false understanding of representation through identity attribution should be avoided. A local scholar is not per se better equipped to explain certain developments than a foreign one, nor do they necessarily represent the heterogeneity of explanations that might exist in a specific context. Once engaging in cooperation with and while seeking the inclusion of non-Western voices, scholars should critically reflect on whether they select only those voices that fit their expectations and confirm their pre-established explanations. To achieve true cosmopolitanism, Western scholars might have to allow conflicting voices and resistance to prevalent ideas (Richter et al., 2024; Volk, 2021). Cosmopolitan academic environments thus need to be open to voices that critically reflect seemingly taken for granted perspectives and standards from "other" points of view.

This call for acknowledging and engaging with different ways of thinking is connected to the need for a much stronger inclusion of the flows of ideas circulating around the world. These flows of ideas might not always be easily accessible because of a lack of translations or because they are not published by the dominant publishing houses. Yet, Western scholars should strive to gain this knowledge by expanding their scope when conducting literature reviews by including cooperation partners with respective language access, channeling funds into translation and publishing open access in different languages, and making creative use of tools of artificial intelligence. The call for "mindful inclusion" (Rao, 2019, p. 698) through deliberate and responsible citation practices aims at fostering justice and adding visibility to sources from marginalized groups who have credible and authentic expertise. As citation—in the neoliberal publishing scene—serves as academic capital through metrics, we need to shift to inclusive citational practices as criteria for excellence and diversity.

Context matters: Engaging in comparison and interdisciplinarity

As communication studies build bridges to other disciplines, such as political science, sociology, area, or cultural studies, drawing on more open, transnational, and postcolonial flows of ideas in these disciplines can advance a cosmopolitan understanding of communication studies as well. Hafez and Grüne (2022) showed, for example, how such an interdisciplinary perspective helps us to understand communication phenomena on the macro and micro levels. They borrowed from political science and area studies to explore broader systemic contexts, and at the same time, included sociological and cultural perspectives to understand everyday life communication.

Here, we underline the need for comparative research in particular. Comparisons serve as a central epistemological strategy for uncovering and understanding conditioning contexts (Thomaß, 2016, p. 51). Working with inductive comparisons can provide scholars with starting points for understanding the configurations of media environments and avoiding a Eurocentric bias by using a hermeneutic analysis of latent structures and processes (McLeod & Blumler, 1987, pp. 314–316). Through comparison, scholars can reflect on normative ideals and not only learn about different research realities but also potentially change how they perceive and produce analytical categories beyond hegemonic concepts and theories. Comparison creates an inclusive matrix of knowledge, especially when designing research across the most similar and most different designs. Yet, as de Albuquerque (2021) has warned us, when engaging in comparison, we should refrain from defining "our analytical subjects in the function of their negative relation with regard to the Anglophone western standards" (p. 185).

What seems to be most important for deep internationalization and true cosmopolitanism is seeking (local) context knowledge before jumping to conclusions. For example, the digital age has given us unprecedented access to vast amounts of data, particularly from social media and online platforms. However, the sheer volume of data does not necessarily lead to deeper knowledge. The risk with big data research is that it can become decontextualized, overlooking the cultural, political, and social contexts that shape these data points. The assumption that more data means better generalizability, scalability,

and predictive power often overlooks that smaller-scale, context-led research provides a better nuanced, grounded understanding (Powers & Vera-Zambrano, 2018).

An example from transcultural communication for the need for a solid understanding of context is the research on media productions of minority groups in Western societies, particularly if these groups come from countries and regions from the Global South. We need to acknowledge that the migration situation influences people's political expressions about their home countries. Yet, we cannot assume that they reconstruct different political camps within the migration situation nor that they seek a separation from the host country's society, as is often done in simplified explanations. Rather, we have to take into account transcultural communication flows, traditional methods of political critique, and cultural expressions to understand minority communication from a cosmopolitan perspective (Horz, 2014). This shows how much context knowledge matters.

Adapting methodologies and research foci

Diversifying contexts and research objects also demands an adaptation of methodologies and research foci. A one-instrument-fits-all methodological approach is doomed to fail in a cosmopolitan setting. In order to understand transnational and global patterns and common experiences, comparative studies should take center stage, aiming to examine phenomena across countries, regions, or social groups. In particular, context-focused research, for example, that uses ethnographic and participatory methods should be considered, that is, methods that "explore and influence social reality in partnership" (von Unger, 2014, p. 1). This means that research is no longer just about people but "with" people. This leads to a double objective: the participation of social actors as co-researchers, as well as measures for individual and collective empowerment (von Unger, 2014, p. 1). In particular, the targeted inclusion of marginalized groups of people and actors in the research processes can bring about a redistribution of power relations in the shaping of society, result in the reduction of marginalization, and thus strengthen social cohesion (Hamidi & Mielke Möglich, 2021). Another important approach is not to dismiss research in closed or invisible contexts just because research is difficult as many gatekeepers, that is, reviewers, editors, and funding entities, do (Badr, 2024). An intersectional perspective is conducive to analyzing the different variables, such as gender, race, religion, or ethnicity, that create social inequalities (Crenshaw, 1989). Critical approaches, such as feminist or postcolonial studies, also expand our research with their distinct focus on power imbalances and social inequalities.

Immersive approaches, such as participatory action research (PAR), could be a technique to counter the abovementioned lack of data that scholars may be confronted with—in global contexts but also in researching transcultural communication phenomena situated in Western superdiverse societies (Vertovec, 2021). Participatory designs can produce situated knowledge by collaborative analysis (Cornish et al., 2023). This means the ability first to analyze structures of inequality and second to understand and include standpoints of marginalized and vulnerable research subjects (Harding, 1991).

Moreover, research should not focus solely on digital or mediatized communication, as many vital social and communicative processes occur outside the digital realm, and

even beyond mediatized publics. A more comprehensive approach to research must include these offline communication practices, providing a fuller picture of the social dynamics at play. A self-reflexive approach must be taken throughout the research process to reflect on the power structures underlying the research—including institutional power, historical or (post)colonial legacies, gender or ethnic disparities, unequal distribution of resources, etc.—and how they may influence one's own research.

What is the contribution of this book? Incorporating cosmopolitanism into the subfields of communication studies

After outlining the challenges and potential avenues for achieving a cosmopolitan turn in communication studies, the subsequent chapters aim to facilitate the realization of this turn across various subfields within the discipline. Many scholars and students based in the West feel the urgency to de-Westernize or adopt a cosmopolitan approach, yet they often lack concrete guidelines beyond general and abstract propositions. In response, we have chosen to illuminate various subfields of communication studies, with the aim of demonstrating how a cosmopolitan perspective can be applied within these domains. While it was beyond the scope of this book to address every subfield, we have tried to be as comprehensive as possible by including areas such as journalism research and education, political communication, media ethics, media governance, media system research, crisis communication, war and conflict coverage, interpersonal communication, media development, and media diversity studies. Each chapter seeks to illustrate how a cosmopolitan perspective can enhance our understanding of both global and local communication processes, which are ultimately interconnected. The frameworks presented provide a clearer and more concrete understanding of how the challenges outlined earlier can be addressed. These chapters frequently draw on best practice examples and engage with relevant literature to facilitate a seamless transition from a Western-centric to a cosmopolitan approach for all interested scholars in the field of communication studies.

Barbara Thomass deals with **media ethics**, one of the crucial subfields of communication studies. Building on media ethics, one can analyze communication and media practices in light of the norms and values that ought to guide them. Before being able to do this, however, these norms and values need to be defined and agreed upon. But are norms and values universal? How can we deal with universalism from a cosmopolitan perspective that should be sympathetic to and acknowledge the differences of possibly contradicting norms and values? In her chapter, Barbara Thomass takes us on a historical journey to understand the idea of universalism and its underlying normativity. She raises the question of how to strike the balance between normative universalism and contextualizing cosmopolitanism. She argues that we must consider different perspectives while avoiding epistemic violence and othering in defining ethical norms.

Christine Horz-Ishak guides us into the subfield of **media diversity** studies. She explains the need for "unboxing" the diversity paradigm in order to achieve a cosmopolitan approach. Picking up critical debates about diversity as the structural production of difference, Horz-Ishak demonstrates that media diversity research often tends to be instrumental, tokenistic, and aligned with official politics, thus lacking a genuinely cosmopoli-

tan perspective. Drawing on the cosmopolitan critique, she develops a heuristic framework for media diversity research, which is useful for unveiling emancipatory communication phenomena of minorities as well as power structures and inequalities within media organizations. This framework offers a foundation for conducting more systematic and contextualized analyses of diversity within the media in the future.

Kai Hafez and Anne Grüne address in their chapter several subfields of communication studies, such as **interpersonal communication**, **media sociology**, and **political communication**. They focus on non-mediated political and social communication from an international comparative perspective as a means to deliberately counteract a technocentric trend in communication studies. They argue that areas of non-mediated forms of communication are crucial to understanding party and government politics but also interactions in everyday lifeworlds. Their approach to cosmopolitanism advocates for a polycentric and interdisciplinary perspective on communication beyond mediatization, aiming to understand global transformations and the role of non-mediated forms of communication within them.

"Context matters" is the message that Melanie Radue, Johanna Mack, and Carola Richter emphasize in their chapter on **media system research.** This is one of the key subfields in communication studies, in which scholars attempt to understand why the media is performing and organized as it is in various countries by analyzing the underlying structures and conditions. The authors argue that current research, however, is often shaped by Western norm-driven deficit analyses that ignore the respective contexts. Context-led approaches that focus on historical path dependencies, power imbalances, and relations are presented as remedies by the authors.

The subfield of **media governance** concerns both the informal and formal processes and practices that determine the framework in which media perform. Similar to the chapter on media systems, Sarah Anne Ganter emphasizes the importance of carefully studying political, economic, and cultural contexts to avoid falling into the trap of hegemonic analyses of media policies. She highlights the significant shortcoming of relying heavily on Western case studies while neglecting research from the Global South. Ganter argues that excluding the Global South leads to overlooking diverse realities and perspectives crucial for understanding media governance, including debates on what media freedom, independence, or privacy rights mean to people and decision-makers in different regions of the world.

The subsequent chapter delves into the subfield of **risk and crisis communication**. Risk and crisis communication are specialized fields of media practice designed to help people understand potential hazards, minimize harm, and maintain trust during and after critical events. In their effort to reimagine risk and crisis communication research through a cosmopolitan lens, Pauline Gidget Estella, Martin Löffelholz, and Yi Xu specifically critique the enduring US- and Eurocentrism in the production of knowledge about crisis communication. They argue that, without a cosmopolitan perspective, risk and crisis communication cannot be effectively practiced or researched in increasingly multicultural societies, especially given the transnational nature of most crises.

In the next four chapters, we refer mainly to **journalism studies** as one of the central subfields of communication studies, including journalism cultures, journalistic coverage and data-driven journalism.

Melanie Radue, Thomas Eckerl, Oliver Hahn, and Beate Illg discuss the need to evaluate different **journalistic cultures** and role models against the specific contexts in which they appear. By highlighting some of what are often referred to pejoratively as prefix journalisms, they explain how it is essential to overcome constructed boundaries in mainstream understandings of journalism research. By highlighting the cosmopolitan potential arising from a review of different types of journalism and a critical analysis of academic typologies, this chapter serves as a guide for conducting a meaningful, context sensitive analysis of journalism cultures.

War and conflict reporting is a distinct area of journalism, one in which othering, biased knowledge production, and blind spots of coverage can be detected, as if under a magnifying glass. The same applies for research on war coverage, which often appears to align with an instrumental Western agenda. Kathrin Schleicher and Aynur Sarısakaloğlu therefore call for empowering non-Western narratives in research on war coverage. They explain why war and conflicts become visible in journalistic coverage and why they do not. Both authors criticize the often biased portrayal of wars and give recommendations for adopting a more cosmopolitan perspective while conducting research on war coverage.

In another chapter, Aynur Sarısakaloğlu examines the **digitalization of journalism** through the lens of algorithm-driven journalism. Automation and artificial intelligence are increasingly shaping newsrooms, although this shift occurs unevenly across the globe, leading to what the author terms an "AI-driven divide." This mirrors the long-standing digital divide in the unequal distribution of technologies between the West and the Global South. However, it is not only about unequal access—issues such as technology-inscribed biases and algorithmic colonialism also require attention. The author argues that addressing these challenges necessitates a cosmopolitan mindset and offers a conceptual framework for advancing cosmopolitan research on algorithm-driven journalism, focusing on ethical and governance questions.

The next chapter then turns to the topic of data-driven journalism, and it explores the subject of **fact-checking in journalism**. Regina Cazzamatta introduces the work of Latin American fact-checkers and the ways in which they combat misinformation. In examining the distinctive features of the Latin American context, she addresses geographic disparities in knowledge production about fact-checking and journalism. Latin American fact-checkers frequently lack access to infrastructure, financial resources, information, and capacity building opportunities, somewhat similar to their counterparts in the West. However, to assess their practices, it is essential to comprehend the specific contexts in which they operate, as their methodologies may diverge from those of their Western colleagues. Cazzamatta posits that universalizing approaches to media systems offer only limited insights into diverse fact-checking practices.

The following two chapters address the subfields of media development (or media assistance) and journalism education, the latter most often being included in media development initiatives, too. In these two subfields, international and cross-cultural cooperation is inscribed per se. Nevertheless, it is crucial to reflect on power asymmetries in knowledge production and transfer, as well as conceptual and methodological Eurocentrism. A cosmopolitan approach offers potential remedies for these problems.

Concerning the subfield of **media development**, Susanne Fengler and colleagues present a critical review of "The industry known as 'media development.'" The authors have been involved in the MEDAS 21 project, a postgraduate program focused on investigating the media's role in peacebuilding, journalism training, and women journalists' perspectives in the Global South. Building on the project's findings, they apply a critical lens to current media assistance practices, particularly the dependencies between donor and recipient countries. In light of shifting geopolitical realities and growing awareness of power asymmetries in the Global South, the authors argue that a cosmopolitan approach to media assistance is essential.

Finally, Mira Keßler with Kefa Hamidi and Beate Illg discuss the challenges and possibilities of **international journalism training**. Western concepts of journalism are typically regarded as the standard for "good" journalism and are emphasized in journalism education globally. However, inequality, as well as context-specific norms, practices, and the daily realities of journalists, may necessitate alternative understandings of journalistic roles. The authors draw on examples from Nepal and Afghanistan to demonstrate that with a cosmopolitan mindset, a hierarchy-free exchange of knowledge between research and practice could be established, making journalism education more meaningful.

These 12 chapters, each addressing specific subfields of communication studies, are framed by two key chapters. The first provides a deeper understanding of the history—and the notable absence—of cosmopolitanism in communication studies. The final chapter explores the future of cosmopolitan communication studies, emphasizing the potential for progress through carefully planned international cooperation.

The chapter on the **historical trajectories** of entanglement and ignorance looks at the factors influencing the process of deep internationalization in the academic field of communication studies more generally. Delving into the history of German, French, and Brazilian communication studies, Stefanie Averbeck-Lietz, Lisa Bolz, and Otávio Daros unfold the historical developments that show why entangled research traditions exist in some communities, while in other communities the variety of research traditions seem to be completely ignored. For the first time, the authors reveal how German newspaper studies during the Nazi era attempted a colonial-style internationalization—efforts that were rightly ignored by other research communities, including the Germans themselves after World War II. In contrast, the French and Brazilian academic communities engaged in extensive exchanges. This historical chapter thus not only helps explain why certain scientific communities are more or less cosmopolitan, but it also highlights that seemingly peripheral communities may offer broader perspectives on media and communication phenomena that deserve recognition.

The concluding chapter addresses the challenges and solutions involved in assembling and working within **international research teams**. Sophia Volk argues that genuinely international and inclusive research teams are crucial for producing meaningful, context sensitive studies. Drawing on extensive research—including systematic reviews of English-language journals, anecdotal reflections, and a qualitative study on comparative communication scholarship—Volk emphasizes that the inclusion of diverse perspectives is key to fostering a cosmopolitan approach in communication studies. As previously discussed, collaboration with scholars from various regions and backgrounds is essential for achieving this. However, such collaborations often face challenges, includ-

ing misunderstandings, differing work routines, "culture clashes," and power asymmetries, particularly in terms of resources. Volk critically examines these typical issues and offers solutions and best practice examples to help overcome these obstacles.

The chapters in this book present a variety of approaches to a cosmopolitan turn in communication studies, both from "below" and from "within." They not only highlight the challenges we face in expanding our regional and epistemological perspectives but also offer guidelines and examples for addressing these issues. As this book emerged from fruitful discussions within a network of scholars with diverse perspectives and experiences, we hope to extend this dialogue to a broader academic community. We aim for this book to serve as a catalyst for further research, a guide for fostering greater cosmopolitanism in communication studies, and an invitation to join us in an ongoing conversation about the deep internationalization of the field.

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